

October 6, 2003

Dear Educators:

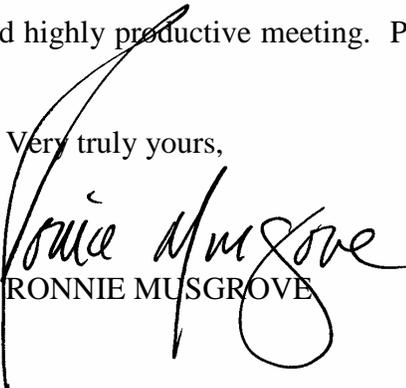
As Governor of the State of Mississippi, I am pleased to extend greetings to you as you gather for Mississippi's first *Closing the Achievement Gap Conference*.

We have made tremendous progress in education in the state of Mississippi. Scores on state and national tests released this past July showed our students achieving at higher levels than ever before and scoring above the national average for the first time. With regards to No Child Left Behind, 86% of our schools met AYP in reading/language arts, 84% met AYP in mathematics, and 54% met AYP in the area of other indicators.

Thank you for your service and your contributions to public education. You are to be commended for your commitment to your students and their progress. Your work with them each day is critical to our continued success. By investing in education and strong accountability measures, we will continue to see those investments pay off in terms of a better quality of life, a more competitive workforce, and more high quality good paying jobs for the citizens of Mississippi.

Best wishes for a very successful and highly productive meeting. Please feel free to call on me if I may be of assistance to you.

Very truly yours,



RONNIE MUSGROVE

RM:klr